

PUBLIC

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DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

11 July 2019

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(Children's Services) Care Leavers' Employment Opportunities - Paid Internships – (Young People)

1. Purpose of the Report

- To update Cabinet on the progress made under the paid Internships for Care Leavers' programme established in 2016.
- To seek approval to use the existing underspend of £165k held in reserves to extend the Care Leavers paid Internships to 31 March 2020.

2. Information and Analysis

The Council is responsible for supporting looked after children as they make the transition to adulthood. This responsibility also applies to all Care Leavers until they reach the age of 21 or, if they are being helped with education or training, to the end of the agreed programme (which can take them beyond their 25th birthday). "Keep On Caring, 2016" also means Care Leavers up to 25 years of age can request support from the Local Authority to help them with their transition to adulthood, including support with accessing employment, education and training opportunities.

Internships is one of a number of schemes available to support care leavers, and it is recognised that progression of care leavers through this scheme can be slow and requires a good deal of support due to the various additional needs and pressures for care leavers, often linked to their history and poor start in life.

The spend on the Internship Project has therefore not been fully used each year, but it is noteworthy that some care leavers have achieved significant success through participation in this scheme. It is therefore requested that access to the underspend is retained to ensure that there is full capacity for the period April 2019 to the end of March 2020 to enable future care leavers to take advantage of the scheme whenever able to do so.

In August 2018, there were 735 care leavers. 349 are in the 16 to 21 age range.

Data for August 2018 shows a cohort of 15,191 young people in the 16 and 17 age range, of which 420 (2.8%) are NEET. The proportion of Care Leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) for the same time period is 38.1%, as illustrated below:

	EET	NEET	Not EET or NEET	UNKNOWN	Total
16-21 Care Leavers	185 (53.0%)	133 (38.1%)	10 (2.9%)	21 (6.0%)	349

In line with the national picture, 2018-19 proportion of Care Leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) is much higher than the general academic age population and Care Leavers are widely regarded to be disadvantaged in terms of employment and educational opportunities. This is a key area of focus for the Council, and it is essential that the Authority continues to do whatever it can to increase the number of Care Leavers in employment, education or training (EET). As such, the paid internships proposed in this paper are an example of some of the work that the Council is doing to create opportunities for Care Leavers.

Council will continue in its commitment to strive towards 100% of our Care Leavers working towards, or positively engaged in, employment, education and training.

2.1 Update on Internships

Care Leaver Paid Internship

At its meeting on 23 February 2016 Cabinet approved re-establishment of an entry route into employment with the Council through 10 (FTE) paid temporary Internships each year. The purpose of this was to offer training, work experience and payment at the age-related national minimum wage rates. The Internships were established with the aim of leading to either further employment or an apprenticeship within the Council and enabling guaranteed interviews for appropriate vacancies. See Appendix 1 for details of the Care Leaver Paid Internship Offer.

Outcomes

To date, the Council has had a total of 17 Internships of which 4 are currently on the programme. 7 have left the programme for a variety of reasons which, specifically, are:

- 1 internship ended due to custodial sentence
- 2 left due to substance misuse issues
- 4 left due to mental health issues.

Of the remaining 6, they have progressed successfully:

- 3 of the Internees have moved into full-time employment; 2 with DCC, one with an external company
- 3 have moved from Internship to Apprenticeships within DCC, one partly funded by the Care Leavers Employment Project (CLEP).

Lessons Learned

Several lessons have been learned from the early Internships:

- A longer period of work experience is key to ensuring that the Internship is in an area which the young person is interested in, and to also ensure that they are committed and able to sustain employment over the year. Young people are now required to go on work experience for a period of 5 weeks before starting their Internship.
- It remains a big step for young Care Leavers to go from benefits, with their housing being paid for, to going to work every day and having to budget to pay for housing and bills. An agreement has been reached with Job Centre Plus to ensure that whilst young people are on work experience prior to starting their Internship, they are not sanctioned.
- Additional challenges include the often multiple and complex personal issues many Care Leavers face, including poor mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, offending behaviour and teenage pregnancy. The young people are intensively supported by Care Leavers Employment Project (CLEP) who work in partnership with each young person's Barnardo's Aftercare Worker, Multi-agency Team Workers, Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES) Tutor, placement supervisor and a range of other involved professionals; for example, Creative Mentor, Substance Misuse Worker etc., if they have one. Even with this, it takes huge commitment and motivation from the young person in order for them to successfully complete the Internship.
- Travel to work can be an issue, both in terms of time and costs. Help with travel costs will be assessed prior to starting Internship. Help with applying for a *Wheels to Work* moped and payment for up to 10 driving lessons are offered to all interns.
- Challenges for workplace supervisors. Whilst training was provided to them, a few have provided feedback about their personal & professional challenges in trying to be a supportive mentor and Corporate Parent to the young people they are supporting, whilst at the same time adhering to organisational policies and procedures with young people who often have multiple and complex support needs.
- An improvement of the database for internships is required to be better able to track and develop internships.

2.2 Future Proposals

Building on the lessons learned the following actions will be undertaken to maximise take-up of the placements available. Further details are available in **“Understanding our Children in Care and Care Leavers - Achieving Education, Employment or Training (EET) for all of our Children in Care and Care Leavers”**, February 2018.

- To consider linking a Creative Mentor if a young person agrees.
- Work has commenced to encourage District Councils to exempt care leavers from paying council tax, to ease their financial circumstances and in recognition of the wider corporate parenting duties established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Work with Housing providers, District Housing Officers and the Commissioning Team to look at exemptions to sanctions and developing supportive and partnership approaches to assist young people who get into arrears.
- Increasing the type and breadth of opportunities to develop employability experiences and skills, as well as Work Experience and Internship placements available by updating the Chief Officer Pledges Offer.
- Work in partnership with DACES to provide a wider range of employability skills, CPD opportunities for potential Interns.
- Use the Team Around the Child meetings which are multi-agency, involving all relevant professionals to aid more holistic planning and better communication to celebrate success and integrated working as and when support issues arise, so that creative and supportive solutions can be provided.
- Develop training and support for workplace supervisors.
- Review the timetable of Internship Reviews, specifically the careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to ensure that all the options available internally and externally are reviewed in a timely manner in order to aid progress and transition.
- Work is already progressing to improve the reliability of recording interventions and destinations on CORE Client Caseload Information System to aid analysis of aspirations, placements and progressions.
- Explore ways in which to increase the promotion of Internships to Early Help and After Care Services.
- Work with those care leavers who have mental health, substance misuse or teenage pregnancies to enable more access to interventions and support.

3. Human Resources Considerations

The ten, full-time equivalent, one-year Internships are ring-fenced to Care Leavers. The Internship posts are paid at the hourly pay rates which are in accordance with the national, age-related, minimum wage rates. For the purposes of parity, the current apprenticeship scheme also applies the national minimum wage rates to apprentices working for the Council.

Those who successfully complete an internship with the Council, may apply for apprenticeship vacancies on a guaranteed interview basis during the last three months of their internship. Further, if suitable alternative employment within Derbyshire County Council does arise, they also have the opportunity to apply for this during the last three months of their internship.

4. Financial Considerations

Following the Cabinet report on 23 February 2016, £250k was allocated from the General Reserves in order to fund the Care Leavers Paid Internships which aimed to support 10 FTE Internships each year through 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Due to a delayed start in 2016, and the lower than expected overall number of Interns, there has been an underspend of the allocated reserves.

During 2016/17, spend was £29k, in 2017/18 spend was £56k and in 2018/19 spend was £79k. As a result, the balance of the Reserve at the 31st March 2018 was £165k and by 31st March 2019 was at £86k.

The National minimum wage rates from April 2019 are, for 18 to 20 year-olds, £6.15 per hour, and for 21 to 24 year-olds, £7.70 per hour.

As it is not known at this time how soon current Interns may move on, or the age profiles of any new Care Leavers who may successfully gain an Internship, it is not possible to calculate an exact cost. However, it is anticipated that the remaining Reserve would allow for 6-8 Internships to run for a further 12 months.

5. Legal and Human Rights Considerations

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on the local authority to advice, assist and befriend a child after the Authority has ceased to look after them. Enabling the child to have the necessary skills for independent living is an integral element of this duty. Providing a gateway to employment via temporary posts with the Council ring-fenced to NEET Care Leavers is therefore consistent with this duty.

The Children (Leaving Care) Regulations 2001 came into force on 1 October 2001. They make provision about support for children and young people aged 16 and over who are, or have been looked after by a local authority; that the following matters must be considered in the pathway plan and any review of it:

- A detailed plan for the education or training of the child or young person.
- How the responsible Authority will assist the child or young person in relation to employment or other purposeful activity or occupation.

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 clearly sets out the duties of a local authority to children in care and care leavers, as part of their corporate parenting duties, to promote high aspirations, and prepare them for independence and transition into adulthood.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, health, environmental, property, social value and transport considerations.

7. Key Decision

No.

8. Call-in

Is it required that the call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No.

9. Background Papers

Cabinet Papers:

- 23 February 2016, 'Future Delivery of the Internal Apprenticeship Scheme (Council Services)'.
• 23 February 2016, 'Care Leavers Employment Opportunities (Children's Services)'.

10. Officer's Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the report and gives approval to continue to utilise the existing reserves in order to extend the Care Leavers paid Internships for a period up to 31 March 2020.

**Jane Parfremment
Executive Director for Children's Services**

Care Leaver Paid Internship Offer

The paid Internship offers a genuine opportunity for a Care Leaver to gain valuable skills, qualifications and work experience, whilst also receiving an income which, to most, is vital. The programme offers a real opportunity for Care Leavers to progress into permanent full-time work or an apprenticeship through the development of their skills and employability; it will be part of the overall Care Leaver Offer. Paid Internship is a response to the fact that Care Leavers are not accessing the opportunities being offered due to a number of barriers, both financial and skills-related and is consistent with the Council's ongoing duty to advise and assist Care Leavers.

These Internships are for a one-year fixed-term and enable young people to develop their employability skills, gain paid employment to build up their CV and enable them to gain a work-based reference. The opportunity to enter into full-time paid employment with the Council will be an additional incentive for young people to take up these Internships.

Each Internship is tailored to the young person's needs and aspirations. It is:

- 12 months in length on a paid basis
- Inclusive of work placement(s) based on the individual's aspirations
- Inclusive of training consisting of:
 - English and Maths up to level 1
 - Employability skills training
 - ICT functional skills
 - Mentoring support
 - Information, advice and guidance.

Within the last three months of the Internship, young people are invited to meet with National Careers Service and are able to apply for apprenticeships and internal job opportunities within DCC.

Performance Management

In order to ensure this work is effectively monitored, there is a clear governance structure. The Corporate Parenting Committee has taken responsibility for the implementation of the programme, with regular reports to the Employment and Skills Board. Individual senior managers who have responsibility for a group of Care Leavers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate and timely interventions take place, by holding service areas to account.

This ensures accountability at all levels and regular progress reports are provided. All interventions are recorded on Mosaic.